

21 November 1983

TPR 500
511.E

APPENDIX E(ADDED). STATEMENTS OF DIFFERENCES TO POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

E-1. GENERAL

a. Purpose. This guidance is intended to assist SPMOs and management officials in developing statements of differences in order to fill positions at trainee and developmental levels.

b. Use of standards. The preparation of any statement of differences requires careful review of the applicable classification or job grading standards. The statement of differences is part of a position description, and must be correctly classified in accordance with OPM classification standards, and an appropriate title assigned. Questions should be referred to the servicing classification activity.

c. Restructuring positions at lower grade levels. Three different approaches can be taken depending on the reason for restructuring, the basic nature of the work performed, and the restructured grade level desired. They are: (a) Decrease the difficulty/complexity of the duties and responsibilities; (b) Increase the supervisory controls exercised; or (c) both. To determine the best approach, a review of the pertinent classification standards is recommended. Supervisors should also review pertinent classification standards carefully to assure that work assignments to incumbents of restructured positions are commensurate with their grades.

E-2. GENERAL SCHEDULE POSITIONS

a. In developing statements of differences for General Schedule positions, the meaning of the word "level" must be considered. "Level" refers to the normal grade progression pattern within a specific series. For General Schedule positions classified in series that follow a one-grade interval pattern (e.g., GS-3, 4, 5, 6, 7), one level equals one grade. For positions classified in series that follow a two-grade interval pattern (e.g., GS-5, 7, 9, 11, 12), one level equals two grades through GS-11; above GS-11, one level equals one grade. (See FPM chapter 300, appendix A, for a list of series for which a two-grade interval pattern is normal). The GS-201, Personnel Management Series, for example, is a two-grade interval series. If the established, fully operational target grade level for a GS-201 were GS-11, the job would be restructured to a lower grade for recruiting by following the normal interval pattern: to GS-9 would be one level, to GS-7 would be two levels, and the GS-5 would be three levels. If the established, fully operational target grade level for a GS-201 position were GS-9, the job could be restructured only two levels lower, since GS-5 is the entrance level in the GS-201 series. On the other hand, the GS-203, Personnel Clerical and Assistance Series, is not included in the two-grade series list, and therefore follows a one-grade interval pattern. A GS-203-6 position being restructured to a lower grade for recruiting would drop to a GS-5 for one level, to GS-4 for two levels, and to a GS-3 for three levels. In the case of positions in two-grade interval series but classified at an even-numbered grade (for example, Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-10), the normal two-grade interval pattern must still be followed: GS-5, 7, 9, 10.

b. After identifying the appropriate grade level pattern for a position, the SPMO must then make careful cross-reference to the classification criteria at various grade levels in the appropriate classification standard. In preparing a statement of differences for a GS-201-9 position (target GS-11 position), duty assignments and controls over work must be commensurate with the criteria outlined in the GS-201 standard at the GS-9 level. As indicated above, this can be accomplished by decreasing the difficulty/complexity of the duties and responsibilities, increasing the supervisory controls exercised, or doing both.

E-3. TRADES AND LABOR POSITIONS

a. Trades and labor positions (wage positions) follow a somewhat different progression pattern than General Schedule positions, the exact pattern depending upon the established journeyman grade of the occupation. In those occupations where the journeyman grade is WG-9 or above, trainee and developmental grade levels are determined through application of the Job Grading Standards for Intermediate Jobs and/or Helper Jobs. To determine the established journeyman grade of a particular occupation, refer to the appropriate job grading standard (not to the position description). For example, the Electronics Mechanic, WG-2604 standard states in the introductory material (page 2) that "WG-11 in this standard is to be used as the "journeyman grade" in applying the Intermediate Job Grading Table."

b. After determining the journeyman grade, refer to the Job Grading Standard for Intermediate Jobs to identify the appropriate intermediate grade level for the position. The grade levels are given in the table on page 2, reprinted here:

INTERMEDIATE JOB GRADING TABLE

When the journeyman grade is:	The intermediate grade is:
WG-12	WG-9
WG-11	WG-8
WG-10	WG-8
WG-9	WG-7

c. To restructure the position to a still lower level, reference must be made to the Job Grading Standard for Trades Helper Jobs, which identifies the helper grade level as WG-5 for all positions where the journeyman grade is WG-9 or above. Therefore, the career ladder for a WG-11 Electronics Mechanic is WG-5, WG-8, WG-11. For wage positions where the established journeyman grade is lower than WG-9, grade restructuring is accomplished in one grade decrements. For example, for a WG-6 Warehouse Worker, the grade progression pattern would be WG-4, WG-5, WG-6 (reference the Job Grading Standard for Warehouse Worker, WG-6907).

E-4. EXCEPTIONS

a. Statements of differences are designed for recruiting and developmental use only to the journeyman level as defined by the appropriate standard. In the case of General Schedule positions in a two-grade interval series, this maximum full performance level in the National Guard is usually GS-11. Normally SODs should not be used for:

- Supervisory positions, whether GS or WS.
- Small Shop chief positions.
- GS positions above the GS-11 level.
- Above-journeyman level WG-type positions (for example, Electronics Mechanic, WG-12)

The use of statements of differences in the above situations are not precluded entirely. There may be special circumstances in which such usage might be justified, in which case prior approval and instructions must be obtained from the servicing classification activity.

b. Neither helper nor intermediate electronic intergraded systems mechanic jobs are included in the coverage of the WG-2610 standard. The type and scope of knowledge and skill required of this occupation makes it inappropriate for trainee work. Lower level jobs should be assigned to one of the other electronics occupations as appropriate to the duty assignment. In most cases the appropriate occupation would be that of the Electronics Mechanic, WG-2604.

E-5. POSITION DESCRIPTION CONTROL NUMBERS

Statements of differences are designated by the addition of an alphabetic suffix to the position description control number. For positions lowered by one level, the suffix "A" is added; for two levels, a "B", and for three levels, a "C". These suffixes are not to be reported into the TPMIS. They are to be used as a local addendum only.

TECHNICIAN PERSONNEL REGULATION
No. 500

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
Washington, DC 20310 21 November 1983

TECHNICIAN PERSONNEL REGULATION 500

This regulation contains National Guard Bureau policy and procedures on position classification and applies to both military and competitive technicians. Unless otherwise specified, the term "technician" as used in this regulation applies to both military and competitive technicians.

1. The following supplements to FPM Chapter 500 are enclosed:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a. 511.1 | e. 511.6 |
| b. 511.3 | f. 511.8 |
| c. 511.4 | g. 511.E |
| d. 511.5 | |

2. File this transmittal sheet in front of the publication for reference purposes.

Users of this publication are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to NGB-TN, 5600 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041

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(Each SPMO)

*Supersedes TPM 500 (page 1 of 511.1; page 1 of 511.4). TPMB No. 511-1, dated 11 February 1977; and TPMB 511-2, dated 22 February 1979

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SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(With the exception of subchapter 6, TPR 500 (511) applies to all General Schedule Classification Act positions and to positions in the Federal Wage System).

1-4. AGENCY AUTHORITY

a. Administration of the system. The authority to classify positions and to establish pay grades for both Army and Air National Guard technicians is the responsibility of the Chief, National Guard Bureau, as delegated by the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force. This includes authority to designate which positions require membership in the National Guard and which do not.

d. Redelegation of authority. Authority to classify National Guard technician positions is redelegated to the Chief, Office of Technician Personnel (NGB-TN); the Compensation and Classification Division (NGB-TNC); and the National Guard Classification Activities. Support Personnel Management Offices (SPMO) have authority to make minor changes to position descriptions which do not affect the classification and authority to publish lower graded statements of differences to standard position descriptions.

e(ADDED). Responsibilities.

(1) NGB-TN is responsible for administering the position management and position classification programs for the National Guard.

(2) The three National Guard Classification Activities are responsible for the position classification and position management programs throughout their respective areas of assignment. These responsibilities include:

(a) Ensuring compliance with all pertinent directives, policies, position classification and job grading standards, etc.

(b) Providing interpretation and implementation guidance on pertinent publications.

(c) Providing position classification and position management advisory services.

(d) Conducting on-site position reviews to ensure that all positions are properly described and classified.

(e) Developing and classifying position descriptions for implementation nationwide and forwarding them to NGB-TN for release.

(f) Developing, classifying, and releasing position descriptions required to accommodate unique local situations.

(g) Responding to OPM regional offices and NGB personnel management evaluations.

(h) Reviewing classification appeals and making recommendations to NGB-TN on their disposition.

(i) Conducting position classification and position management education programs for SPMO representatives and for supervisors and managers.

(3) SPMOs are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the position classification and position management programs within their respective States. In

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addition to responsibilities regarding specific personnel actions, the SPMO shares the program improvement responsibility with the classification activity. For example, the SPMO is responsible for:

- (a) Providing recommendations to the classification activity for improved organizational structuring.
 - (b) Requesting the elimination of any position determined to be unnecessary.
 - (c) Restructuring positions to lower grades, when practical, for upward mobility and economy.
 - (d) Providing for the education and training of management and supervisory personnel in the principles of good position management and promoting understanding and acceptance of position classification.
 - (e) Assuring that technicians and supervisors are aware of the necessity of compatibility of the technician and military assignment, as well as assuring that such compatibility is maintained.
 - (f) Analyzing duties of positions suspected of being misclassified, working with the supervisor of the position to draft new descriptions when deemed necessary, and making recommendations to the classification activity.
 - (g) Assuring that classification standards and guides are current and complete, and that they are available to supervisors and technicians desiring to examine them.
 - (h) Assuring that the annual maintenance review is properly conducted and positions certified, and that all cases of noncurrent or inaccurate descriptions encountered in the review are corrected.
 - (i) Making recommendations to the classification activity for exception position descriptions.
 - (j) Conducting position reviews and furnishing evaluations upon request of either NGB-TN or the classification activity.
 - (k) Reviewing vacant positions prior to initiating recruitment to ensure that assigned duties are still required and whether higher level duties can be assigned to another position of equivalent or higher grade.
 - (l) Clearing the position through the servicing classification activity prior to initiating recruitment.
 - (m) Ensuring that supervisory, leader, or additive grade small shop chief positions will be responsible for the day-to-day supervision or leadership of the required number of subordinates before staffing the position at the authorized grade level. Also, processing reclassification actions when the number of onboard subordinates falls below that required to support the grade of the higher level (WS, WL, or small shop chief) positions.
 - (n) Providing advice and assistance on classification appeals.
- (4) Management responsibilities.

Activity managers, as designated by the State Adjutant General, will have the responsibility for taking actions affecting position management as follows:

(a) Initiating procedures to modify position management structures in order to meet mission requirements, improve efficiency, improve economy, or to meet local requirements.

(b) Approving or disapproving requests for action (SFs 52) which affect organizational structure; such as recruiting for vacancies, restructuring positions to lower grades, eliminating positions, or establishing new positions.

(c) Reviewing the position structures periodically to determine that the organization is not unnecessarily split into too many small organizations, does not have too many levels in the chain of command, has no unnecessary positions, and does not have more supervisory positions than are necessary.

(5) Supervisors are responsible for:

(a) Ensuring that positions are accurately described in position descriptions.

(b) Ensuring that incumbents are performing the full range of duties and responsibilities of their official position descriptions.

(c) Recognizing changes in position content and recommending revisions to the SPMO.

(d) Becoming familiar with the principles and procedures of position management and explaining them to technicians as needed.

(e) Informing technicians of classification actions affecting them.

(f) Reviewing all vacant positions, as well as positions that later become vacant, to determine if the duties can be eliminated, assigned to other positions, or modified to permit filling at a lower grade.

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SUBCHAPTER 3. POSITION CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

3-2. MANDATORY USE OF STANDARDS

a(ADDED). Use required. All technician positions will be evaluated in conformance with published Federal classification standards. If no such standards apply directly, evaluation will be consistent with guidance in the following order:

(1) Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification and job grading standards. Upon publication of new standards by OPM, all other standards in conflict with them are superseded automatically. Except for cross-series comparison, use of single agency standards for evaluation purposes without prior written approval from OPM is prohibited.

(2) OPM evaluation decisions. OPM decisions certified to NGB-TN are controlling upon all States. The evaluation of positions to which they apply may not be changed while the major duties remain substantially the same, unless pertinent new standards are issued.

(3) NGB-TN guidance. Classification guidance and evaluation decisions issued by NGB-TN will be used by the classification activities.

b(ADDED). Applying new standards. The classification activities will apply newly published standards within 6 months after receipt, unless a longer period is authorized by OPM.

3-5. BASIC CONCEPTS UNDERLYING THE USE OF CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

d(ADDED). Evaluation statements. A written evaluation statement is required for all positions. The evaluation statement must include:

- (1) Any significant background information.
- (2) Reference to at least one OPM standard used in the evaluation process and the date of the standard.
- (3) An explanation of how the position title and series were determined.
- (4) A full explanation of how the position grade was determined, based on the position's similarity to the referenced standard, and how it differs.
 - (a) For positions classified in accordance with a standard or guide which provides an evaluation format, such as GS-201, Supervisory Grade Evaluation Guide, Clerical Guide, Factor Evaluation System (FES) etc., that format should be used.
 - (b) For wage jobs, each of the four evaluation factors should be treated for each position.
 - (c) For positions classified under the FES, there must be a record of the evaluation judgments made. As a minimum, the point value for each factor, the total point value, and the General Schedule grade must be shown with the benchmark(s), factor level description(s), or primary standard factor levels used in point-rating. Extensive narrative evaluation reports need be used only for those judgments that are not self-evident by reference to the standards used.

(5) If analysis results in grade determination of GS-13, GS-14, or GS-15, an explanation of whether the position is subject to merit pay and the reason for that conclusion.

(6) A statement of conclusion.

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SUBCHAPTER 4. USE OF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS IN CLASSIFICATION

4-1. DEVELOPMENT OF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

OF 8 will be used as the position description form for all technician positions. Positions described on NGB Form 0101 are effective until superseded. A properly classified position description is required for all technician positions.

4-2. STANDARD OF ADEQUACY FOR POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES

g(ADDED). Style and format. The position description should be clear and concise, using simple, direct, and meaningful statements. Generalities and repetition should be avoided. Positions should be described in such a way as to avoid the need for a new description when only minor changes occur, or when additional identical positions, differing in only minor respects, are established. Quantitative data should be given in terms of approximate quantities or as ranges, but not extending beyond the criteria for a single grade level. As much as possible, position descriptions should not extend beyond two or three pages in length.

(1) Nonfactor evaluation system format for General Schedule position descriptions.

(a) Introduction. The introduction portion should consist of a short paragraph explaining the exact location and basic purpose for establishing the position. If the position is supervisory, include the size and scope of the unit supervised. This should usually be in terms of the normal range of the number of subordinates and the grades of those which make up the base level.

(b) Major duties. This section of the position description should give an overall view of the position. The duties and responsibilities, which are essential to the classification of the position and to the determination of placement and recruitment requirements, will be described reflecting what is done and the manner in which the work is accomplished. The duties may be listed in order of their importance or in the sequence in which they occur. Related duties may be grouped according to function. Supervisory positions must indicate the nature and scope of the supervision exercised (how work is planned and assigned, how work is reviewed, administrative responsibilities, participation in management, etc.).

(c) Supervisory controls. Identify the incumbent's immediate supervisor (e.g., facility manager); and describe the supervision received before, during, and upon completion of the assignment or project. Describe the guidelines available; such as directives, manuals, and standard operating procedures. Indicate the extent to which the position requires initiative (taking action without specific instructions, originality, and judgment).

(2) FES format. Positions which are classified by reference to FES standards must be prepared in the factor format. The description of major duties and the nine evaluation factors must complement one another. After the position has been classified under FES, the classifier will show on all copies of the position description, the point values for each factor, the total points for the position, and the General Schedule grade. The major duties section of the position description will be followed by descriptions of the following nine factors (see section VII of Position Classification Standards, General Introduction, Background, and Instructions for a detailed explanation of the factors):

- Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position
- Factor 2. Supervisory Controls
- Factor 3. Guidelines
- Factor 4. Complexity

- Factor 5. Scope and Effect
- Factor 6. Personal Contacts
- Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts
- Factor 8. Physical Demands
- Factor 9. Work Environment

(3) Wage grade position descriptions. In addition to the format described in paragraph 4-2g(1), position descriptions for nonsupervisory wage grade technicians shall contain sufficient information on the following four grading factors to allow proper application of OPM job grading standards:

- Skill and Knowledge
- Responsibility
- Physical Effort
- Working Conditions

To facilitate the analysis of the position and its comparison with job grading standards, factor information should be presented in the same order as in the applicable grading standard (see FPM Supplement 532-1 for detailed information on the factors).

4-3. STANDARDS OF ADEQUACY FOR POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES

a. Management use. Good management requires that a technician's duty assignments be definitely established, clearly outlined, and thoroughly understood; and that there be no conflicting or overlapping responsibilities. Position descriptions maintained on a current and accurate basis serve as effective instruments of management in that they reflect certified duties, authorities, and responsibilities assigned and performed. Although descriptions are used principally as the basis for classifying positions and consequently serve as one of a number of authorized documents that support the payment of funds for work performed, their use by management officials extends to other administrative areas. These include instruction, training, supervision of technicians, preparation of estimates and flow of work, and the execution of programs designed to ensure that the highest skills and abilities are being effectively used consistent with management needs.

b. Required certification. SPMO copies of new or redescribed position descriptions will be certified on the OF 8 at the level of work being performed. The required certification that the position description is an accurate statement and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions will be made by the immediate supervisor (block 20a) and an appropriate higher-level supervisor or manager (block 20b). The incumbent's signature in block 19 is optional with the State. No SF 50 should be issued to fill a new or redescribed position without such certification. If the supervisor feels that the description does not accurately reflect major duties and responsibilities of the position, recommended changes may be submitted to the SPMO.

c. Communication. The function of NGB position classification specialists is not limited to classifying the position, but extends to resolving substantive questions that may arise concerning the accuracy of the position description. Classifiers will work with supervisors, managers, and NGB representatives, as appropriate, to resolve questions concerning description content. When no agreement can be reached between a supervisor and the classification specialist on the propriety or accuracy of a position description, the matter will be taken through the chain of command until it is resolved.

4-4. MAINTENANCE OF ACCURATE DESCRIPTIONS

c(ADDED). Statement of differences

(1) A statement of differences may be prepared for a position description for any one of several reasons; e.g., to differentiate between organizational locations of otherwise identical positions, to place an additional duty in one of two or more identical positions, to remove portions of duties from one of two or more identical positions, and to temporarily lower the grade of a position to aid recruiting and/or fill at trainee level (particularly helpful in such areas as upward mobility). See Appendix E (ADDED) for guidance in developing statements of differences for filling positions at trainee and developmental levels.

(2) Statements of differences are prepared by SPMOs, using both an OF 8 and a supplemental sheet that describes the differences from the basic position description. Block 2 of the OF 8 will be checked "Other" and marked "Statement of Differences." The SPMO will certify the OF 8 by signing in block 21. With the exception of entry level positions in the upward mobility program, military appointment requirements and compatibility requirements cannot be altered from those of the basic description.

4-5. PERIODIC REVIEW OF DESCRIPTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

a. Periodic review. All positions must be reviewed annually. The need for each position is to be considered, and those found to be unnecessary must be abolished. Positions determined to be necessary must be reviewed to assure that the position description is adequate and the classification proper. All positions in a major functional area will be reviewed at the same time. Examples of major functional areas are: USPF0 and ANG aircraft maintenance. From a position management standpoint, an entire function needs to be surveyed at the same time. Fragmented reviews are ineffective and do not address the interrelationships among subfunctions or positions. SPMOs will take necessary action to ensure that each technician's position description is reviewed annually by the supervisor. If major duties and responsibilities are accurate, the supervisor will recertify the supervisory copy of the position description. Changes or deletions of duties and responsibilities may be requested by supervisors if a position description is incorrect. A part of the annual position review will include random desk audits by the SPMO to assure that these requirements are met. Technicians will be notified in advance of desk audits, and SPMOs or supervisors should explain desk audit procedures to technicians. NGB, through the classification activities, will establish an annual schedule of position surveys and will also be responsive to any problem areas that arise as a result of appeals or contact with the State.

b. Desk audits. There will be an ongoing program of desk audits by qualified classification specialists to assure that duty assignments are consistent with published position descriptions and that position classifications conform to published OPM standards. The classification activities will survey annually any jobs that are reported as having undergone a major change since the last survey and at least 10 percent of those jobs on which no changes are reported.

4-6(ADDED). DETERMINING APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS
FOR TECHNICIAN POSITIONS

NGB-TN is responsible for determining appointment requirements for technician positions. This determination is coordinated with the NGB office of primary responsibility. The following factors are considered when establishing these requirements:

a. Service determination. Whether the position should be in the excepted or competitive service is determined in accordance with Public Law 90-486 and the accompanying Senate report which states: "About 95 percent of the technicians would hold noncompetitive positions and would be required to be members of the Guard as a part of their civilian employment. About 5 percent, or 2,000, would be in a competitive Federal status and would constitute principally female employees, clerk-typists, and security guards."

b. Military grade. For all excepted positions, a further determination must be made concerning military grade requirements with consideration given to the following:

(1) The military grade of the most compatible position in the event of mobilization.

(2) Whether the duties, responsibilities, and supervision received and/or given are typical of an officer, warrant officer, or enlisted, or could be appropriate for two or all three. Guidelines for this element are available by comparing career management field descriptions with the technician position description.

(3) That grade inversions are not permissible.

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SUBCHAPTER 5. ASSIGNMENT OF POSITIONS TO CLASSES AND GRADES

5-4. AGENCY CONSULTATION ON CLASSIFICATION ACTIONS AFFECTING
LARGE BLOCKS OF POSITIONS

a. Prior consultation on classification actions.

(1)(ADDED). NGB need not submit to OPM for prior consultative review proposed classification changes affecting fewer than 110 positions when: (a) the positions do not have substantially similar counterparts in other agencies, and (b) the positions are either "one-of-a-kind" jobs in Air National Guard flying locations or "one-of-a-kind" or "two-of-a-kind" jobs in the 53 separate National Guard jurisdictions in the 50 States, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

(2)(ADDED). Classification actions, under subparagraph 1 above, changing the grade of 20 or more substantially similar positions or changing 20 or more substantially similar positions from one system to another (FWS to GS or vice versa) must be reported to OPM within 30 days after such actions are taken. The report must show the nature and kind of positions involved; the organizational locations; and the number of upgradings, downgradings, series, or other changes. It should also clearly show the specific basis for the classification changes. Documentation will include position descriptions, evaluation statements, organization charts, and other pertinent information. Such actions will be subject to any post-audit review OPM deems necessary.

SUECHAPTER 6. CLASSIFICATION APPEALS

6-14(ADDED). NGB APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR TECHNICIANS
EMPLOYED UNDER THE GENERAL SCHEDULE

a. What may be appealed. Technicians employed under the General Schedule may appeal the grade or series of the position officially occupied or the coverage of the position under the General Schedule. There must be agreement between the technician and the supervisor that the position description is accurate. When disputes concerning the description of duties arise, they must be resolved outside of the appeal channel. Final adjudication cannot take place until an accurate position description is implemented. Such cases should be handled as requests for redescription and/or reclassification rather than as classification appeals.

b. Information required. The technician's appeal letter must include:

(1) The appellant's name, location of official headquarters, and the exact location in the organizational structure of the unit in which employed. An organizational chart must also be furnished showing where and how the position fits into the organizational structure.

(2) The present title, series, grade, and position number of the position to which officially assigned.

(3) The title, series, and grade that the appellant considers proper.

(4) Reasons why the present classification is considered incorrect and justification for the classification considered correct by reference to appropriate OPM position classification or job grading standards.

(5) A signed statement that the appellant considers the official position description to be a complete and accurate description of the work.

c. Filing options. Technicians covered under the General Schedule may appeal to the NGB and subsequently to OPM, or they may appeal directly to OPM. Technicians are urged to file their appeal first through NGB channels. However, if they prefer to appeal directly to OPM, they may request the SPMO to furnish information on the procedure to be followed and the address of the appropriate OPM office. General Schedule technicians who appeal directly to OPM lose the right to appeal through NGB channels. Technicians are encouraged to consult with the supervisor and the SPMO for advice and assistance on the procedural aspects of preparing an appeal, and may examine those official documents pertinent to the case.

d. NGB appeal channel. The technician gives the appeal statement to the immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor forwards it through channels to the SPMO, who in turn forwards it through the servicing classification activity to NGB. The appeal should be forwarded to the classification activity as soon as possible after submission by the technician. No time limit is fixed, but within 15 days is a reasonable guideline.

e. Supervisory responsibilities. Supervisors (with assistance from the SPMO) will inform technicians of their right to appeal the classification of their positions, resolve questions as to adequacy and accuracy of duties and responsibilities as stated in technician's official position description, process the appeal promptly, and inform the SPMO of any significant changes in duties and responsibilities in the position under appeal.

f. SPMO responsibilities. The SPMO determines whether the submission meets the requirements of a classification appeal, and assures there is mutual agreement between the technician and the supervisor regarding the statement of duties and responsibilities recorded in the official position description. The following statement is submitted with the appeal: "The undersigned hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete description of this position". This statement is signed and dated by both the technician and the supervisor. The SPMO makes comments and/or recommendations, ensures that all actions at and below this level of authority are completed on a timely basis, forwards the appeal to the NGB through the servicing classification activity, and sends the technician written notification of the referral.

g. Classification activity responsibilities. The servicing classification activity ensures that the appeal is complete and accurate in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter, provides comments and/or recommendations, performs desk audits if needed, and forwards the appeal promptly to NGB-TN; or takes appropriate action if it does not meet requirements and provides advice and assistance to the SPMO.

h. NGB responsibilities. NGB-TN adjudicates the appeal and transmits the appeal decision through channels to the appellant, or notifies the appellant that the appeal has been referred to OPM for final adjudication.

i. Special rules for protection of retroactive benefits. A technician may be entitled to retroactive benefits when a job-grading decision leads to a change to lower grade and a decision on the appeal reverses the adverse classification decision. The classification appeal, however, must be timely in order for the appellant to be eligible for retroactive benefits. To be timely:

(1) An initial appeal must be filed with NGB or OPM not later than 15 calendar days after the effective date of the personnel action taken. In order to preserve a technician's entitlement, the time limit for initial appeal will be stated in the notice of reclassification.

(2) An appeal of the NGB decision on an initial appeal must be filed with OPM within 15 calendar days after the decision is received or 15 calendar days after the effective date of the action taken as a result of the classification decision, whichever is later. Each NGB decision on a classification appeal will state the time limit for a technician's further appeal.

(3) The established time limits may be extended if a technician can show that he/she was not notified of these limits and was not otherwise aware of the time limits or that circumstances beyond the technician's control prevented filing within these limits.

j. Effect on agency actions. Filing an appeal to either NGB or OPM will not stop a classification action taken by the State and/or directed by NGB.

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SUBCHAPTER 8(ADDED). NOTIFICATION OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

8-1. CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE BASED ON CLASSIFICATION OR JOB-GRADING
DETERMINATION

a. General. The following procedures apply when a technician is changed to lower grade because of a classification determination to downgrade the technician's position either to correct a classification or job-grading error or because the applicable standard has changed. Also covered are downgrading actions resulting from changes brought about by, for example, weapons systems conversions or the combining or realignment of functions. In these cases, the downward reclassification of certain positions may be required because of the loss or reduction in supervisory duties or the lesser complexity of equipment or systems serviced.

(1) When it is determined that a position warrants reclassification at a lower grade, it does not follow that the technician occupying the position should necessarily be reduced in grade by the State.

(2) The State must consider reassigning the technician to those vacancies, identified and funded for use in placement, for which the technician is qualified. The State need not consider the technician for a position that will not last at least 3 months. In determining whether the technician is qualified for assignment to other positions, the State may apply the principles contained in TPR 300(351), paragraph 6-2.

(3) The State must consider the technician for vacancies in intervening grades when there are no appropriate vacancies at the same grade, and the downward reclassification is more than one grade.

(4) Technicians entitled to grade retention will be afforded priority placement in accordance with TPR 300(335), part III.

(5) If the technician is ineligible for grade retention, consideration for assignment to another position must continue until the effective date of the change to lower grade. In these cases, the reclassification notice must identify what efforts the State made to place the technician and why these efforts failed.

b. Reclassification action. In reclassification actions which result in a position being reclassified to a lower grade, the technician will be given a 30-day notice of Reclassification Action. This notice will:

(1) Inform the technician, specifically and in detail, why the position is being downgraded, and include a copy of the new position description. If the previous classification was in error, the notice must explain how it was erroneous. If a new or revised classification standard was the reason for the downgrading, the notice must explain how the application of the standard results in evaluating the position at a lower grade. In some cases, the required information can be given to the technician by attaching a copy of the position classification evaluation statement to the notice. When the position has been downgraded because of an OPM classification decision, the requirement for specificity and detail is met by referring to and providing a copy of the OPM classification decision with the notice. Where the downgrading is caused by organizational or mission changes, the technician must be told how and why the position is affected; e.g., a reduction in supervisory responsibilities or a change in the type of equipment serviced.

(2) If eligible, inform the technician of the grade and/or pay retention benefits, the conditions under which those benefits terminate, and of the technician's coverage under the placement plan for technicians under grade retention.

(3) Contain a statement of the technician's right to file a classification appeal in accordance with the procedures contained in FPM chapter 511/TPR 500(511.6) or FPM Supplement 532-1/TPR 532-1. It will be pointed out that the adverse classification action may not be appealed through TPR 752 channels and that a technician may appeal only the classification decision. For technicians not covered by grade or pay retention, the notice must state that the appeal must be filed no later than 15 days after the effective date of the change to lower grade in order to preserve any retroactive benefits.

(4) For technicians not entitled to grade retention, show what efforts the State made to reassign the technician and why these efforts failed. If the downward reclassification is more than one grade, the notice must explain what efforts the State made to reassign the technician at intervening grades and why these efforts failed. This can be done by identifying in the notice the titles and grades of at least three positions for which the technician was considered and not selected or, if applicable, that the technician did not qualify for any available positions. In either case, the State must include in the notice a statement of the arrangements it will make for the technician if he/she wishes to review a complete list of the positions considered for and statements of pertinent qualification requirements for these positions.

c. Issuing authority. The SPMO is the agent for issuing and signing reclassification action notices.

8-2. SAMPLE NOTICE
NOTIFICATION OF A CLASSIFICATION DECISION
(Appropriate Letterhead)

(DATE)

SUBJECT: Reclassification Action

TO: (Name, Organization, etc.)

1. This is a notice that you will be changed from Auditor, GS-510-11, to Auditor, GS-510-9, effective (date). The reasons for the change to lower grade are as follows:

a. Classification standard revised. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently issued a revised classification standard covering accounting and auditing positions classifiable in the GS-510 series. A classification study based on the revised classification standard and analysis of the duties and responsibilities of your position has found that the position you occupy - Auditor, GS-510-11, Position Description No. _____ is covered by the revised standard and warrants classification as Auditor, GS-510-9. The study found that your position includes responsibility for complete audit of a centralized accounting system with no subordinate, subsidiary, or branch accounting records. Previous audit experience and standard audit procedures are directly applicable to your work. Assignments of this type are included in the revised standard for auditor positions at the GS-9 level. By contrast, the GS-11 level of the standard includes audits of greater scope and complexity; for example, a complete audit of an entity with financial responsibilities diverse enough to involve cost, inventory, and administrative accounting systems integrated through control accounts.

b Reassignment to vacant position impossible. (1) You were considered for vacant positions for Cost Accountant, GS-510-11; Systems Accountant, GS-510-11; and Staff

Accountant, GS-510-11. However, you were not selected for any of these positions, and we were not able to reassign you; or (2) Reassignment to vacant position impossible. You did not meet the qualification requirements for any available vacant positions and, therefore, we were not able to reassign you.

2. You may review the list of current vacancies at grades GS-11 and GS-10 and the applicable qualification standards in the Support Personnel Management Office. You may also review the OPM classification standard and the classification study in the Support Personnel Management Office. Ask for (name), placement officer. This is the only material that was relied on for the change to lower grade action. You will be allowed 4 hours of official time to review this material. You should arrange with (name and designation) for use of official time.

3. You have the right to file a classification appeal after the effective date of the reclassification action. You may appeal to NGB or directly to OPM, or first to NGB and then to OPM. You may appeal only the classification decision. The adverse classification action may not be appealed through TPR 752 channels. Since you are not entitled to grade or pay retention, the appeal must be filed no later than 15 days after the effective date of the change to lower grade in order to preserve any retroactive benefits.

4. It is mandatory that positions in the Federal service be properly classified. Therefore, the classification action to be taken, the adjustment in your grade resulting from the classification action, and any reduction in your pay resulting from the grade adjustment are considered to promote the efficiency of the service.

5. If there is anything in this notice that you do not understand or wish to have explained in more detail, contact (name or office).

(Signature and identification)